UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/48/174
20 May 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-eighth session
Item 115 (b) of the preliminary list*

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Letter dated 18 May 1993 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I enclose herewith the statement of His Excellency Lt. General Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir, Chairman of the Revolution Command Council for National Salvation, before the Conference on Religions, held at Khartoum, the Sudan, on 26 April 1993 (see annex).

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 115 (b) of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Ahmed SULIMAN
Permanent Representative

* A/48/50.

ANNEX

IN THE NAME OF GOD
THE MERCIFUL AND THE COMPASSIONATE

خطاب السيد الرئيس أمام مؤتمر حوار الأديان

Address of: H.E. Lt. Gen. Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir, Chairman, Revolution Command Council for National Salvation

Friendship Hall, Khartoum
April 26,1993

Distinguished Delegates,
Honourable Guests,
Greetings to you all.

This great gathering today can be described as a meeting of the faithfulls and believers in one God, the Almighty. It is a meeting of those who believe in the unity of mankind, a meeting of those who aspire for God's salvation, a meeting of those who are longing to raise high religious values in this world for the benefit of mankind, namely eternal happiness and redemption from the woes of this world.

The Sudanese people are very honoured by your presence here with us today; going through the list of the particpants of this gathering one finds great religious leaders, highly placed thinkers and academics derived from various parts of the world.

Your presence here in this religious conference is welcome.
Your great contribution towards its success is also much appreciated.

/...

Needless to say that this meeting is aimed at the promotion of tolerance , unity and co-existence among God's people , irrespective of differences of faith , race or colour . We intend in this conference to achieve mutual respect through meaningful dialogue .

For God has said: "O Mankind we created you from a single pair of male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other (not that you , may despise each other) Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you "

(ALHUJURAT V . 13)

Distinguished delegates
honourable guests

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the world of the day seems to drift away from its original concepts and ideals . I say this because it appears that the world of today has adopted materialism as its top priority and has shunned away from religious values . As a result most of man's desires and actions are being governed by materialistic values : thus neglecting religion from man's everyday life . On the other hand material benefits seem to override religious values . This , unfortunately , has led to the break down of man's moral behaviour and has resulted in the appearence of strange phenomena such as racism and chauvinism, which had expressed themselves in the past in various forms such as Nazism and Fascism which sprung up in the early part of this century .The results of these phenomena are all known to us.

As a consequence of man's losing sight of religious values to material ones, phenomena like racial violence and destruction to life and property have become dominant features of the present day.

It was hoped that advancenment of modern technology would necessarily lead to ultimate happinessand prosperity of mankind. But unfortunately , the question that readily comes to mind today is whether the development of modern technology has in any way satisfied the expectations of man kind .The answer to that question appears to be in the negative .

Inspite of improving man's living conditions , through enhancement of technolgy , the world has continued to face lots of insurmountable problems : death continues to take away millions of lives not through disease as was the case in the past, but from the the effects of man's made disasters either through the use of the most sophisticated weapons or through environmental degradation due to increased industrialization. Modren technology was used for the destruction of lives and propery during the first and the second world wars! How much destrunction would modern technology cause if a third world war was to erupt ? .

Another thing worth noting here is that for years it had been expected that economic developrnent could have improved the living conditions of mankind .
This could have been done through further development of better economic and administrative systems . It was also thought that injustice and imbalance in economic development could have disappeared as a result of administering justice to all . But where is the balanced economic development in the present world ? How wide is the economic gap that now exists between the rich and the poor ? How much does poverty and misery increase every day in the present world ? Where is the economic cooperation needed in International economic relations?

Alas! the rich are getting richer every day at the expense of the poor. It must also be borne in mind that the poor are made to live in endless debts leading to more poverty and misery as a result of that imbalanced relationship. It was expected too that International relations would have reduced injustice in favour of the poor. The reality is that the present world has shown that; the existing International Institutions are nothing but mere tools used by the more powerful states to enable them achieve their own interests at the disadvantage of the weaker ones.

Another thing which should be noted here is the deveopment of mankind from a simple stage to a more complex stage characterised by different ways

and intensity of activities. The development in means of transport and communication has added to this complexity. It brought people all over the world closer to one another. This development has created a new system of relations between individuals, societies and nations. It was therefore expected that a new meaningful and self-imposing value system should have been established to suit this complex stage of development.

Instead, the Modern World Seems to create its own values at random without being guided by religion and its values.

The world of to day is, therefore, lacking religious values. And this, in essence, is the real challenge that faces us today, we the believers.

We have the duty, at this juncture , to save humanity from going astray. This in turn is to be achieved in our opinion, through serious and meaningful dialogue between members of different religions and faiths, this is the purpose, distinguished delegates and honourable guests,for which we are gathered here to-day in this Hall.

We have started to establish in the Sudan a mode of sustainable development based on religion and its tenets. We believe that religion by itself is a positive motivator for all human activities, as a result we have made religious values guide the individual's as well as the state activities in our country. This is aimed at creating a basis of good citizenship and humane community in order to lead a modern nation. We are doing this by creating a life based on truth, virtue, ridding it from hypocrisy and corruption. so as to change the society, promote economic prosperity, achieve justice and attain political stability.

I am glad to convey to you that we have achieved much in this regard. I hope during your short stay here with us, you will be able to see things for yourselves. In response to the above-stated facts, we have already made some legislation that govern our relations with other countries. With that, we hope to establish a new model for International co-operation.

Despite the fact that we have taken Islam as a base to guide our national life because the majority of Sudanese are Muslims, however, it is by no means our intention to impose Islam on non-muslims, as it is falsey featured in some circles. Quite the contrary, we take Islam itself as a moral and legislative guarantee against that.

At any rate, we would like to emphasise here again that Islamic legislation is an integral and comprehensive system, not consisting only of

Islamic punishments, but it is a code of justice which exempts non-muslims from punishments arising from crimes not considered as an offense in their respective personal laws, for example: Possession or drinking of alcohol and exemptions from other religious obligations prescribed by Islam on Muslims, such as payment of "Zakat". In this context, Islam can never be an instrument to oppress other religions. Conversely, Islam reminds all the faithful of the unity of the Abrahamic religions, and exhorts them to adhere to the teachings of their faiths.

Say :" O people of the Book ! come to common terms as between us and you :that we worship None but God ; associate No partners with him , that we erect not from among ourselves Lords and patrons than God "

(AL IMRAN V.64)

" It was we who revealed the law (to moses) : Therein was guidance and light .By its standard have been judged the jews by the prophets who bowed (As in Islam) To God's will ,by the Rabbis and the doctors of law ,for them was entrusted the protection of God's BOOK; and they were witnesses therto : Therefore fear not men and fear Me and sell not my signs for A miserable price . If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what God hath Revealed , they are (no better than Unbelivers. "

(ALMAIDA V. 47)

" Let the people of the Gospel judge by what God hath Revealed therein. If any do fail to judge by (the light of) What God hath revealed they are (No better than) those who rebel."

(AL MAIDA V. 50)

At thus juncture, distinquished delegates and honourable guests, I am glad to say that your meeting coincides today with the beginning of the peace talks between the delegation of the Government of the Sudan and the delegation of the rebel SPLA movement, in the Nigerian Capital Abuja. These peace talks are aimed at halting the armed conflict in the Soutern part of the country, an armed conflict inherited from the colonial rule. It is a result of almost six decades of colonial rule in this country. This problem, to our mind is a living example of a policy void of religion. We have sought and still are seeking all possible means and ways to arrive at a peaceful, negotiated and just settlement of this problem which we consider in the first place, a political problem. In this regard, we shall continue to exert all efforts necessary to resolve the problem peacefully. We avail ourselves of this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to all those who have assisted and continue to assist our Government to bring about a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the conflict; we also pray God the almighity to bless our efforts in this respect.

To conclude, we hope that Almighty God will guide and bless your delibrations throughout the conference, so that it comes out with meaningful, constructive resolutions aimed at the unity of the faithfuls, and their role in contemporary life. To suggest guidelines and means of their implementations. We hope also that the conference will adopt a Code of moral conduct that prescribes tolerance and respect among the believers of different faiths, prohibits doing injustice in religious practices and allowing freedom of worship and preaching. We hope that a bratherly atmosphere and a spirit of love and responsibility will prevail throughout the deliberations, hoping to contribute to the realization of humane society free from tension and hatred that was brought about by all the previous acts of conflict and dissention .

Wishing you a good stay in our country, assuring
All of you that you are among your friends and brothers.

Peace of God be upon you all.